

ways, erodes previously solid foundations of medicine, because words, designations, and titles carry with them well-entrenched meanings. Changing these may destroy time-honored meanings.

At the same time, this is not to play down the important contributions of the new knowledge, techniques, and nostrums that are improving by the day our outlook for sick people. But we are shortsighted if we separate these from the physician who applies them to the treatment of human illness.

It is very disturbing to be forced to replace the historically rooted "physician" with the generic "provider" offered by a new group of medical planners. The word "physician," a person skilled in the art of healing, carries with it a certain dignity. The generic word "provider," when applied to a

physician, carries no such implication. The same applies to other medical professionals such as "nurse" and "physiotherapist."

At a time in our history when medicine is suffering severe criticism from many sides, we must not further take down our image. We must continue to orient ourselves toward the care of the patient and continue to see that we give the most skilled care. We must resist invasion of our profession by those who do not understand the care of the sick.

Machines, laboratories, and corporations do not heal the sick—doctors do! Call us physicians, and we will continue to accept the responsibility this title implies.

PHILIP M. ENGLUND, MD
Casa Blanca Clinic
PO Box 11000
Mesa, AZ 85214-1000

LETTER TO MY DOCTOR

This evening
the white blossoms
on my dogwood tree
cast hope
against the dark.
Because you believed me,
listened,
no guarantees
but no despair,
I trust you.

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Mahwah, New Jersey